



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Initiative for Resilient Great Lakes Coasts Helps Local Governments Design and Develop Habitat-Focused Projects that Improve Local Climate Resilience

This singular initiative creates a pipeline of near shovel-ready climate resilience projects and sustainable partnerships in the Great Lakes Basin.

Chicago, December 19, 2023 – The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have partnered on the *Initiative for Resilient Great Lakes Coasts* to help communities design and develop habitat-focused projects that improve local climate resilience. Previously focused solely on Lake Michigan, this successful initiative will expand in 2024 to include local governments along Lake Superior, Lake Huron, Lake St. Clair, and connecting channels.

Thus far, the Cities Initiative and NOAA have successfully supported more than 30 communities. The initiative includes web-based training and workshops for participants on habitat restoration and climate resilience, as well as one-on-one support from engineering and habitat experts for project visioning and planning. Participants submitting project ideas are also considered for design and engineering work. Municipalities and Tribal Nations are encouraged to participate. Eight to twelve finalist projects will be selected and designed in collaboration with local staff and partners during the two-year effort.

“The Great Lakes are experiencing unprecedented changes in water levels, coastal erosion, and increased flooding, all which lead to decreased water quality and habitat loss. As leaders in coastal communities, we know that the health of our people and economies depend on the health of our lakes and rivers,” said Mayor Mike Duggan of Detroit, Michigan, a Member of the Cities Initiative Board of Directors. “It’s important that we take advantage of opportunities like this initiative to protect our environment and safeguard our communities against any future hazards or disasters.”

In addition to increasing awareness of coastal hazards and nature-based solutions, this effort creates a pipeline of near shovel-ready, nature-based coastal resilience projects and partnerships that will sustain future coastal resilience efforts. FY21 and FY22 funding for this initiative (previously called the Lake Michigan Coastal Resilience Initiative) came from the [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#) which provided engineering and design services for nine projects in the Lake Michigan basin. NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management was the federal lead via an interagency agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Project information can be found [here](#). Additional funding in FY23 to FY24 provided through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative will select a new suite of local projects.

A kickoff webinar to launch the initiative's expansion will be held on January 17, 2024 at 10 am Central/11 am Eastern. [Register here](#).

About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of U.S. and Canadian mayors and chief elected officials dedicated to the environmental, social and economic health of communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. With more than 250 members, the Cities Initiative is the largest local government driven organization in the basin focused on issues impacting residents.

About NOAA's Office for Coastal Management

NOAA's Office for Coastal Management is the federal arm of U.S. efforts to sustainably manage the nation's coastal zone. Housed within NOAA's National Ocean Service, the Office for Coastal Management oversees major initiatives that include the National Coastal Zone Management Program, the Coral Reef Conservation Program, the Digital Coast, and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System.

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